

ABSTRACT

A method and system for conducting rapid control traffic in a time division multiple access (TDMA) communication system comprises a base station communicating with a plurality of user stations in assigned time slots of a time frame. For bearer traffic, time slots are assigned to particular user stations for an extended duration. In unassigned time slots, the base station transmits a general polling message indicating availability of the time slot. A user station desiring to hand off communication from one base station to another uses multiple available time slots at the target base station for exchanging control traffic messages with the target base station. The next available time slot is indicated by a slot pointer in the header of each general polling message to facilitate rapid exchange of control traffic messages. During handover, the user station may establish a new link with the target base station before relinquishing the existing communication link with the old base station.